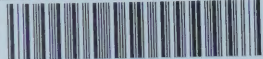


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THE ALBERTA FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

BRIEF

SUBMITTED BY

THE ALBERTA FEDERATION OF HOME AND SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS

TO

THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

OF

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

PLANNING ADDENDUM

DATED JUNE 1, 1973

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PLANNING RATIONALE

The Alberta Federation of Home and School has been in operation in the Province of Alberta from 1929 to the present.

During this period many changes have taken place both within the field of Education and the Social Structures that impact on students, parents, Educational Institutions and Government.

The Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations has traditionally been a rather loose knit organization serving as an information gathering and disseminating agent, and locally as an action group when local situations appeared to require it.

It has also served as a sounding board that has been utilized from time to time to gather public reaction for such groups as the Provincial Department of Education, Alberta School Trustees and Alberta Teachers Association.

It has also replied to various questions and reacted to statements and programs presented by these groups.

Its role was largely passive, especially in later years, as the various other agencies interested in the field of Education became more sophisticated, specialized, highly organized and better funded.

Frequently it was pressed to respond, from the parent's point of view, on items when it was ill prepared to do so due to lack of time, insufficient background material and/or lack of funds which precluded obtaining an accurate cross section of view points from parents across the Province.

The various other Agencies, with full-time specialists on staff, came to discount the value of the lay input received from the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations and its constituents. This was particularly evident during recent years as a movement which might be described as a 'Leave it to the Professionals' School of Thought, came into vogue.

The Alberta Federation of Home and School was dealt with by other agencies in the manner one deals with a rather large and potentially ferocious,

information and issues involved.

The Alberta Federation of Home and School has been in operation in the Province of Alberta from 1919 to the present.

During this period many changes have taken place within the field of Education and the Social Structures that impact on students, parents, Educational Institutions and Government.

The Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations has traditionally been a rather loose knit organization serving as an information gathering and disseminating agency, and locally as an action group when local situations appeared to require it.

It has since served as a sounding board that has been utilized from time to time to gather public reaction for such groups as the Provincial Department of Education, Alberta School Trustees and Alberta Teachers Association.

It has also replied to various questions and requests for statements and programs presented by these groups.

The Federation has been very active in the past, and has been successful in other agencies interested in the field of Education because more specialized, highly organized and better funded.

Frequently it was pressed to respond, from the parent's point of view, on items when it was ill prepared to do so due to lack of time, insufficient background material and/or lack of funds which precluded obtaining an accurate cross section of view points from parents across the Province.

The various other Agencies, with full-time specialists on staff, came to discover the value of the lay input received from the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations and its constituents. This was particularly evident during recent years as a movement which might be described as a 'leave it to the Professionals' School of Thought, came into vogue.

The Alberta Federation of Home and School was dealt with by other agencies in the manner one deals with a rather large and potentially farcical,

sleeping dog in that although one avoids disturbing it (as he pursues his own objectives) one doesn't feed it either.

As many of our children began entering the Educational Institutions at an increasingly early age, the influence of the parents proportionately lessened (other factors are also significant here).

Many of our children began graduating from High School unprepared for either Higher education or the world of work, due in part to Educational Programs isolated from the realities of the working world.

The Citizen-Parent-Taxpayer came to realize that the "Experts" and "Professionals" did not have all the answers and that his/her voice in the Educational Process was largely unheard.

Rumblings of complaint and outright criticism of the passive role of the Alberta Federation of Home and School began to be heard. Dissatisfaction was further evidenced by disaffiliation and disbanding of a number of Local Associations throughout the Province. When questioned they stated that they felt that the Federation was failing to come to grips with real issues.

In the past year the Alberta Federation of Home and School recognized that its role as a Social Tea, Bake Sale and convenient voice of the parent, was over and began to face issues squarely by implementing the first steps of a thorough reorganization process. This process is continuing and will continue despite the problems and obstacles confronting it.

We are recognizing our shortcomings, facing our problems, reassessing our goals, setting priorities and measureable objectives, and selecting methods and activities to better meet the needs and requests of parents throughout the Province.

Some of the realities that are forcing themselves upon us are:

- A. If the voice of the parents is to be heard, it must be well organized and speak factually from an understanding of the information and issues involved.

B. We, as parents, citizens and taxpayers, must know both our rights and responsibilities, and exercise them, in coordination and co-operation with the other agencies involved in the Educational Process.

C. If the Alberta Federation of Home and School is to be an effective instrument for two-way communications of parents' concerns in the educational process, it must: -

1. reach as many parents as possible with factual information
2. accurately represent their views
3. strive for implementation of their decisions as a portion of their rights under the Democratic System.

D. If parents and taxpayers do not learn, speak out and be heard and heeded, in the areas of curriculum, standards, etc., the total future of our Country may well be shaped by a relatively small "special interest group" of Professionals within the short span of two or three generations.

The following assumptions are therefore adopted for Planning purposes:

1. The basic democratic right of every citizen, taxpayer and parent to be heard is a vital part of our democratic way of life.

2. Every citizen has a right to help shape his/her destiny and the future of this country.

3. In order for that voice to be heard and heeded, it must speak in an informed and accurate manner.

4. Alberta Federation of Home and Schools, together with its Local Affiliates, can and must shoulder their duty to be an effective two-way communications instrument working toward the fulfillment of that need.

- Aims and goals of Home and School
 - Organizational structure, roles of members and officers
 - Working with volunteers

Our Approach

It was agreed to adopt a Volunteer-Oriented, Management by Objectives approach for the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations. The following was agreed upon as a working definition:

"A method of informing everyone of the importance of their role in the Organization (from President to Individual member) by establishing priorities and measurable dated objectives. Thus all can be informed of where the Organization is going and how it intends to get there. It further establishes whether we are meeting our schedules and achieving our objectives in line with the goals of the Organization and if not, pinpoints the area of problem and suggests the type of improvements required."

It was decided that the "Statement and Objectives" as outlined in the Policy Statement 1972 are in actual fact the "Goals" of this Organization.

A beginning was made to write an interim plan for the Organization based on these concepts.

The number one priority of the Organization was defined as follows:

Priority #1

To create an effective communication system that reaches the grassroots people on a functional two-way basis.

Methods

- personal contact
- training
- mail

Activities

- Workshops

Step A - Executive Committee Workshop

- Aims and goals of Home and School
- Organizational structure, roles of Members and Officers
- Working with volunteers

5.

- Terminal Behavioural Objectives of the Workshop

Those trained will be knowledgeable of Home and School, its roles and responsibilities and motivated to carry through with workshops at the Board and Area level.

Step B - Board Level Workshop at Olds

- August 17th, 18th and 19th, 1972
- conducted by core trainers trained under Step A - coupled with a study and first reactions recommendations (not priorities) of the Worth Commission Report. Note: Applied for \$4,000.00 grant from Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation, received \$1,000.00.

Step C - Area Workshops

- Area Chairman (appointed where necessary) trained under Step B will inform, train and reinforce local associations with the training received. Regional Vice-Presidents to aid in the training.

Objective #1

Contact to be made with every school in Alberta by November, 1973.

Priority #2

Sufficient money must be obtained to carry on our activities and meet our objectives.

Method

Step A - Through increase in activity and membership in local Home and School Associations.

Step B - Through other Home and School fund-raising activities.

Step C - Apply for a grant from National Home and School Federation for use in training. Application to be made by President at National Conference in Regina, June 5th, 6th, 1972. Note: Granted \$468.00.

Step D - Local Initiative Program (LIP) application for grant to be submitted to include money for staff to be hired from currently unemployed, including cost of training, salaries, travel and administration. Note: Not granted at the Federal level, although \$5,000.00 supplementary grant by the Alberta Department of Education was approved on condition that Federal approval of the balance be granted.

Priority #3

Maintain the day to day activities of the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations in order to supply the necessary support for Local Organizations and meet previous commitments.

SUMMARY

It was found that although a measure of success was achieved in meeting Objective #1, the Alberta Federation of Home and School was seriously hampered by lack of finances and must obtain additional short term funding in order to implement meaningful Citizen/Parent Participation. It is a certainty that once the organization begins to function, revenues from dues, etc. can carry the cost of its operation.

It is interesting to note that although the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations' LIP application was refused as being too low in priority, other grants for projects such as ski trails, snowmobile trails and similar projects were funded.

On this basis we must seriously question the values assigned to Citizen Participation by the Federal Government.

Our Government has assured us on numerous occasions that the voice of the Citizen-Parent-Taxpayer is a vital part of the Educational Process.

This Federation reiterates its stand as presented in its earlier Brief to the Minister of Education on Citizen Involvement and Apathy, dated October 30th, 1972 (see attached), and believes strongly that adequate Provincial and Federal monies must be made available if Citizen Involvement is to be given more than lip service.

